



Town of Dumfries  
Council Meeting

Meeting Date:

April 17, 2012

Agenda Item#

XI - C

## AGENDA ITEM FORM

**TYPE OF AGENDA ITEM:**

- ☐ CONSENT AGENDA  
☐ PRESENTATION  
☒ ACTION ITEM  
☐ TOWN MANAGER & STAFF COMMENTS  
☐ PUBLIC HEARING  
☐ Duly Advertised

**PURPOSE OF ITEM:**

- ☐ INFORMATION ONLY  
☐ DISCUSSION ONLY  
☒ DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION  
☐ Introduction ☐ Resolution  
☐ Ordinance ☐ Grant/MOU  
☒ By Motion ☐ Bylaws  
☐ Certificate

**PRESENTER:** Jerry Foreman

**PRESENTER TITLE:** Councilman

**AGENDA ITEM:**

Discussion of Invocation Policy and Request

**BACKGROUND / SUMMARY:**

The language of the current resolution while attempting to be non-denominational in nature is offensive. The resolution should not call out any specific religion as it is doing now. This resolution specifically calls out "Jesus" and "Christ." The recommended language better takes into account religious tolerances that the Town of Dumfries should reflect.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolution adopted on 9-21-10 regarding Invocation with recommended changes.  
Letter of Invitation to Provide Invocation

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

To have the resolution reviewed for legality and the rewording of the resolution to be adopted by Council at a future meeting.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Name: Jerry Foreman

Phone#: 703-441-0881

E-mail: [hongforeman@dumfriesva.gov](mailto:hongforeman@dumfriesva.gov)

**FOR USE DURING MEETING**

**VOTE:**

☐ PASSED

☐ NOT PASSED

Y	N		Y	N	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Barr	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foreman
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jurgensen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toney
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	West			

Y	N	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forrester
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Washington



## DUMFRIES, VIRGINIA

Virginia's Oldest Continuously Chartered Town  
CHARTERED 1749 INCORPORATED 1961

17755 Main Street  
Dumfries, Virginia 22026-2386  
Tel. 703-221-3400 / Fax 703-221-3544  
[www.DumfriesVirginia.org](http://www.DumfriesVirginia.org)

### RESOLUTION

#### *Invocation Policy for the Town Council Meetings for the Town of Dumfries*

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Dumfries desires to be open and respectful and create an environment that is open and welcoming of all visitors, residents and business owners;

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Dumfries does not desire to have any effect of affiliating the government of the Town of Dumfries with any particular faith, belief or creed nor express the council's preference for or against, any faith or religious organization;

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Dumfries acknowledges and expresses its respect for the diversity of religious denominations, faiths and creeds represented and practiced among the citizens of the Town of Dumfries;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS COUNCIL THAT THE TOWN OF DUMFRIES DOES HEREBY ADOPT THE FOLLOWING INVOCATION POLICY FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE TOWN OF DUMFRIES:

- The Invocation will be at the beginning of the agenda at a time certain so that anyone desiring to do so may avoid the invocation;
- No elected official, Town employee or anyone at the meeting shall be required to or encouraged to participate in the prayer;
- The Town Clerk will compile a database of all congregations within 10 miles of the Town of Dumfries— and any Town resident who attends a legitimate, tax-exempt church or place of worship outside of the Town of Dumfries may request that his or her place of worship be added to the list;
- The Town Clerk will mail a letter once a year to the religious leader of every congregation in the database, inviting them to participate in providing a prayer on a rotating basis;
- No religious leader will be permitted to offer a prayer for two consecutive meetings or more than four times per year;

Deleted: months

Deleted: three

- In the event that no religious leader is available for a Town Council meeting, a Town Council member may fill in for religious leaders;
- Town officials are prohibited from asking about, reviewing or having any involvement in the content of any prayer offered, unless he/she is giving the prayer themselves;
- It is acceptable to mention "God" in generic prayers recited during invocations, but it is not permissible to mention a specific God or religion by name;
- Neutral, "civil religion" terms such as "God," "Almighty God," "Creator," "Providence," and "Heaven" are acceptable in the prayers offered;
- No prayer is permitted that can be construed to advance or disparage any particular faith, sect, or creed;
- It is acceptable to pray for wisdom, unity, and/or blessings of peace and prosperity;
- It is not acceptable to lead a prayer that would call for audience participation.

**Deleted:** <#>Prayers may not be addressed to "Jesus," "Christ," or any variation on those names. A prayer is "addressed" to Jesus if it contains the phrase, "in Jesus' name we pray" or anything similar;¶

**Deleted:** recognizably Christian

Resolved by the Town Council of Dumfries this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2012.

TOWN OF DUMFRIES:

By: \_\_\_\_\_ (SEAL)  
First, Last, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Town Clerk, Dawn Hobgood

**Deleted:** Catherine Koslicki





## DUMFRIES, VIRGINIA

Virginia's Oldest Continuously Chartered Town

CHARTERED 1749 INCORPORATED 1961

17755 Main Street  
Dumfries, Virginia 22026-2386  
Tel: 703-221-3400 / Fax: 703-221-3544  
[www.DumfriesVirginia.org](http://www.DumfriesVirginia.org)

January 5, 2012

Dear Pastor,

On behalf of the Dumfries Town Council, I would like to cordially invite you to give the Invocation at a future Council meeting. Invitations are being extended to religious leaders and organizations that serve the Dumfries community. The Invocation is given at the opening of the Regular Session meetings of the Council, which are held the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM (unless otherwise indicated).

The members of Council desire to be open and respectful and create an environment that is welcoming of all visitors, residents and business owners. Council values your religious beliefs and your right to express them, and embraces the diversity of religious denominations, faiths and creeds represented and practiced among the citizens of the Town of Dumfries. In accordance with the United States Supreme Court ruling (*TURNER V. CITY COUNCIL OF FREDERICKSBURG*) and the resolution adopted by Council, we would ask that your prayers be non-denominational in nature. Prayers asking for wisdom, unity, and/or blessings of peace and prosperity and those addressing neutral, "civil religion" terms such as "God," "Almighty God," "Creator," "Providence," and "Heaven" are encouraged.

If you would like to offer the Invocation at a future Council meeting your response is appreciated by Wednesday, January 4, 2012, via mail, phone or email. Please indicate the name of the organization you represent, your name/title, and your contact information. To ensure diversity, please also indicate the religious denomination, faith or creed represented. I have enclosed the 2012 Town Council meeting schedule for your review. Participation will be on a rotating basis.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Dawn Hobgood, Town Clerk  
Town of Dumfries  
17755 Main Street  
Dumfries, VA 22026  
703/221-3400, Ext. 114  
Email: [dhobgood@dumfriesva.gov](mailto:dhobgood@dumfriesva.gov)

Enclosure:  
2012 Town Council meeting schedule